

# Make-Believe Matters. The Moral Role Things Play in Dementia Care (Poster)

## Citation for published version (APA):

Kamphof, I., & Hendriks, R. (2020). *Make-Believe Matters. The Moral Role Things Play in Dementia Care (Poster)*. 1. Poster session presented at Jaarevent Deltaplan Dementie 2020, Netherlands.

## Document status and date:

Published: 03/11/2020

## Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

## Document license:

Unspecified

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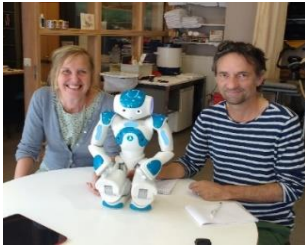
## Make-Believe Matters

### The Moral Role Things Play in Dementia Care

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#### Summary

Residential dementia care increasingly makes use of objects and artificial environments to support people with dementia, whose cognitive abilities are challenged, in sensual and emotional ways (e.g. in emotion-oriented care, therapeutic design). Many of these objects have aspects of make-believe. Think e.g. of social robots, therapy dolls, virtual-reality. People with dementia are particularly vulnerable to a loss of trust.

In close co-operation with professionals in care and design, this project investigated *when the use of objects that involve aspects of make-believe supports the personhood of people with dementia. And when must it be seen as deceitful or manipulative?*

Relationships with objects involve our thinking, but also our senses, emotions and (inter)actions. Therefore, the project extended questions of truth and deceit from *make-believe*, also to *make-feel* and *make-play*.

It developed ethical guidelines and workshop material for professionals in care and design to support case-to-case decision making on these questions.



#### Ethics of deception and truthfulness in dementia care

Care professionals generally agree that lying to vulnerable people is wrong. But does this also mean that you always have to tell the truth? The truth might hurt people who forget painful facts (e.g. the death of a loved one, their dementia). People with dementia also may experience reality differently. Person-centered care teaches to take these experiences seriously in their emotional significance.

This situation is further complicated with the influx of things with aspects of make-believe in dementia care. (When) are imitation bus stops for people who want to leave for home justified? How to properly use dolls, robot pets, or virtual environments that offer as-if experiences?

Five core values are at stake: the *autonomy* and the *dignity* of people with dementia; the *authenticity* of their lives and of their social and material environment; the possibility to *trust* their environment; and the *integrity* of professionals in care and design.

#### Publications

- Kamphof, I. & Hendriks, R. (in print). How to be a good robot? Human-nonhuman play in dementia care. C. Douglas et al. (eds.) *More-Than-Human Companionship*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Kamphof, I. & Hendriks, R. (2019). Beyond Façade. Home-making and truthfulness in dementia care. B. Pasveer et al. (eds.) *Ways of Home Making in End of Life Care* (pp.271-292), Palgrave: London.
- Hendriks, R., Kamphof, I., & Swierstra, T. (2018). In Sachen Illusionen/Make-believe Matters. In A. Kuckert-Wöstheinrich (Ed.) *Ethik, Design, Demenz - eine multidisziplinäre Annäherung/ Ethics, design, dementia – a multidisciplinary approach* (pp. 16-43). Neuss: St. Augustinus Memory Zentrum.
- Kamphof, I., & Hendriks, R. (2018). Doen alsof met behulp van dingen: Waarheid en misleiden in de persoonsgerichte zorg. *Handboek Dementie* (pp.1-17). Antwerpen: Expertisecentrum Dementie Vlaanderen/Brussel: Politeia.

#### Workshop material



guide for teachers; case descriptions of ethical dilemmas (e.g. around exit camouflage, virtual reality, robot pets, imitation bus stop; dolls); set of cards presenting the five core values; targeted assignments that invite to evaluate the case and arrive at a motivated ethical decision on suitable use and design of objects.